

Make Christmas better than usual by making your own decorations.

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If you are staying in Beijing this Christmas, have a break from the norm and try something different.

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Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth.

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Christmas lights twinkle in the Kempinski Hotel

Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Get into the Spirit of Christmas

By Alastair Morrison

The Christmas spirit is waiting to be grasped by us all, whether we live in the East or West. The real spirit of the season can only be found in each of our hearts. This is the time of year when we should not listen to reports about what we should buy, do, or how we should feel. This does not mean we should be purely selfish however.

The Christmas season allows us to relax, let our guard down, be a bit silly, or just go for it and be as silly as we can. We need to go to parties, dress up, laugh and make merry. We can mend old grievances, embrace our foes, and let ambition dissolve. As the rhythm of work slows, decorations and color fill our offices, mornings start later, afternoons end earlier.

We battle the crowds in our towns and cities, allow the carols in the air to soothe our impatience, and enter the stores in search of gifts for loved ones. For those who cringe at the phrase "Christmas shopping", let the crowds sway you, take you, dance with you through the icy streets. A crowd out for a party offers a world of encounters. Unburden your hearts, talk to your neighbor as you queue up clutching your credit cards, share a joke maybe.

We bring enormous trees into our homes that we shower in lights, chocolates and flowing paper. Mistletoe is strategically positioned over those intimate doorways. Fires roar leading children to wonder how on earth Santa will be able to stand the heat as he glides his massive frame down the chimney.

At Christmas there is almost nothing we can't do. We can visit relations, bringing wine and cakes. We can meet with friends old and new. We can lend an ear to those in pain, and the lonely. We can talk to our mother and father, husband and wife, daughter and son. We can sit by the fire, read a book, fall asleep, make a wish, dream awhile, drink mulled wine, play cards, watch television, gaze at the fading light of day, sing carols, eat chocolate, dance, smoke a pipe, go to church, reflect upon the world, let our hearts sink into peace.

Remember this Christmas, rediscover yourself and share this warmth with others.

Due to lack of big noses and in order to save you from the pain of reading thick newspapers, our Christmas and New Year special editions, issue 33 and 34, will only be eight pages instead of the usual sixteen. The paper will return to normal on January 4, 2002.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: LI SHI

Chinese Gifts for Western Holidays



Foreign visitors shop up a store in Yabaolu Market

Photo by Lily

By Chen Ying

Selling Christmas decorations and gifts has become big business in Beijing. Shoppers at the famous markets in Beijing have ensured commodities labeled "MADE IN CHINA" have been delivered all over the world.

"This is our first time in Beijing! It's

a nice place. We came here to buy some Christmas gifts for our friends," said Heini Kelosaari as she walked through Yabaolu Market with her friend Simo Harju. They are from Finland, the homeland of Santa Claus.

Many foreigners are looking for Xmas gifts here as well as the local customers before they return to their hometowns

for the Christmas holidays. The international dealers are the busiest. Dealers from Russia, Japan, France weave in and out of the markets to make deals with the local wholesalers.

"You can pick up a thousand kinds of decorations here," said Liu Yanhong, a saleswoman in a Yabaolu Market stall, "such as colored lanterns, can-

dles, tinsel, bells, colorful ribbons and even Santa suits."

It is the same situation in other markets. In Tianyi Market, dealers have been delivering containers abroad since July. With increased competition, merchants have begun to seek professional designs to keep up with new fashions and improve quality.



Christmas is coming and China will celebrate along with the rest of the world. But have a look at some of the weird and wonderful ways some people like to enjoy themselves during the holidays.

Stairway to Heaven

By Wang Sipei/Shan Jinlaing

Tired of Christmas parties, dance performances, carnivals and even bars, Chengdu people have begun to embrace the humanitarian meaning of Christmas. Dozens of the city's youth will be climbing stairs instead this holiday season.

As part of its charity activities, the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Chengdu will play host to the charity event. Each participant will pay 80 yuan to enter in aid of senior citizens charities.

"Different from other Christmas celebrations, people are not coming here for pleasure," said an unidentified official of the organizer, Holiday Inn Chengdu. "Every one will climb from the basement to the 26th floor, altogether about 600 steps."

To encourage more entrants, the hotel will award prizes to the fastest climber and the one who shows the best spirit in the event. Judges will oversee the competition, allowing two climbers to start every 30 seconds. Doctors will be on hand in case of emergency.

Ms. Zhang, employed in the media became the first entrant. She said, "it is up to every one to choose the way for spending his or her Christmas as it is a popular festival." It is a more noble way to attend the charity activity, she noted.

The number of applicants is booming, which was surprising, revealed the hotel. Most applicants are white-collar workers in their 20s and 30s.

Christmas Tree Lights Ruins in N.Y.

By Chaka Ferguson

For a moment on the night of December 7 at ground zero, the sound of heavy machinery removing tons of rubble was drowned out by holiday cheer as workers celebrated the lighting of a 30-foot Christmas tree atop the World Trade Center ruins – it's making life bearable again.

Topped with an American flag, the tree was adorned with thousands of angels bearing the names of the more than 3,000 people killed or missing in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It was illuminated by New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani with help from children of the victims of the tragedy.

"If you work down here everyday, you need something like this to bring a smile back to your face," said 35-year-old construction worker Don Foley.

Hundreds of workers at ground zero took a momentary break Friday night to watch the lighting ceremony of the 30-foot tree and sing Christmas carols.

The ceremony included the singing of the national anthem and "God Bless America." Officials also read the names of the dozens of construction workers, painters, carpenters and other laborers who perished in the attacks.

The tree lighting ceremony was the brainchild of construction worker Jimmy Nolan, who said he came up with the idea of placing a Christmas tree at ground zero as a morale booster for the workers.

"We lost a great trophy," said Nolan, who stood next to the mayor during the ceremony. "We need this. I never saw so many people at ground zero with smiles on their faces."

Giuliani compared Sept. 11 to the surprise attack by the Japanese against the United States at Pearl Harbor. The 60th anniversary of the event was marked that day.

Shanghai Snow Ball

By Shan Jinliang

Different from many cities in China, Shanghai holds its most popular Christmas events in bars rather than hotels. Malone's Bar, a well-known bar in the city, began its Christmas activities early, on December 15.

The bar was decorated in a unique way for Christmas: mistletoe hanging from every nook, crack and crevice. The party on December 15 was named "Snowman & Snowballs Party" and they built snowmen using artificial snow. The whole exciting party lasted from 9 pm to 2 am the next day. Live band Art-6 and DJs Paul and Brad pumped out the music. Drink specials all night long, the party-goers had the time of their lives.

Larger than life Father and Mother Christmas entertain delighted shoppers in Hong Kong Taikoo Ching on December 14. Wearing 2.7-meter stilts, the pair will perform in the store from December 15 to January 1, 2002.

Photo by Yang Jili



Diving Santa feeds fish in a Tokyo aquarium.

Xinhua / Reuters Photo



Rent-a-Claus! Santas attend their annual meeting at Berlin University on December 3. The University will supply the city's Santas over the Christmas holiday, at a rate of \$25 a day.

Xinhua / Reuters Photo



50 Harley Davison riding Santas roar through the streets of Zurich, Switzerland December 5.

Xinhua / AFP Photo



Contestants in the annual Christmas Pudding Race battle it out in central London on December 8.

Photo by Hou Shaohua



Santas dress in Ferrari red at their factory in Marinelo, Italy.

Xinhua / Reuters Photo



Residents of Fuzhou have been searching for Santa suits since November. Photo by Jiang Kehong

More Dough than Usual in Shenzhen

By Zhou Jie / Shan Jinliang

There seem to be no end to the gimmicks that people will think of to attract customers at Christmas time. The Pavilion Hotel, Shenzhen, constructed a 8-sq-m room made entirely of bread in its lobby on December 12.

With bread used as bricks and butter as mortar, the small room was displayed with cakes and snacks.

According to Mr. Wang, a hotel official, two cooks spent one month and used dozens of tons of flour to make the eatable house. A grand Christmas party with dancing and a lucky draw will be held on Christmas Eve.

Apart from the activities in hotels, Xinxing Square, near the Di Wang Commercial Center is constructing a big stage for the Christmas carnival and the New Year countdown activity. Held for several years, it has become one of the leading tourist events in the city. Windows on the World will present its Peace Choir Symphony Concert on the night of December 23. Happy Valley of Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town (OCT), a well-known local tourist spot, will host a pop music festival from Christmas Eve to January 2. Lucky Shenzhen residents can also have an opportunity to join in the Maya Beach Mask Carnival at the same time.

With an average age of 29, Shenzhen inhabitants know how to enjoy themselves, and Christmas is no exception. Peng Yuancai, a leading official from the Management office of Housing Information, an IT company, told Shenzhen Metropolitan Weekly that the company staff will have time off over the Christmas holiday as it was a foreign joint business. The staff will go and visit a modern artistic sculpture exhibition and spend time in local bars.



Photo by Tang Jing

Guangzhou: Eat, Drink and be Merry!

By Zhong Yu, Guangzhou Morning Post

Guangzhou folk love food. As the saying goes, they eat anything with four legs except a table! The city has truly earned its reputation as a "paradise for eaters."

So how do you think the city will celebrate Christmas? Bingo! An International Food Festival, to be held from December 21 to January 3.

The International Food Festival, held for the fifteenth time, has become a tradition in Guangzhou. From this city, Cantonese food started to spread around the world.

What makes Cantonese cuisine so popular? The long list includes innovation, fresh ingredients, skills in using disparate seasonings and creative sauces, and the ability to elevate the lowliest of food, from pigs' feet to kidneys, into an art form.

During the festival, hundreds of restaurants and snack shops will do their best to attract visitors' eyes and stomachs. If you happen to drop in on the festival, don't forget to try as many styles as you can, as I have done since I arrived in 1997.

And don't forget to witness Cantonese eaters' courage to try some bizarre food. This courage makes them famous throughout the country. Even insects can't escape their mouths. A dark green insect called Shui Gaza locally is the main ingredient of a popular snack. Shui Gaza literally means water cockroach. A disgusting name for food, isn't it? To tell you the truth, it is my favorite. Let me tell you how to eat the bugs. After the stir-fried water cockroaches are served, peel the wings and shells and put what is left into your mouth, just like eating a peanut! Peter, one of our foreign proofreaders, calls them "the best bugs in town" because he loves the then so much.

Guangzhou's presents for Christmas, of course, are a lot more than insects. Huge Christmas trees in front of hotels, Christmas hats on salesmen's heads, Santa Claus's images on shops' windows, jingle bells on restaurants' doors, millions of flowers dotting every street—Even if Santa Claus himself were to arrive, he would have to rack his brains to think what he could bring that Guangzhou doesn't already have.



Home

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DECEMBER 21, 2001

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EDITOR: JIAN RONG, CHEN YING DESIGNER: LI SHI

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL



Martin's family

Roast Duck — German Style

By Martin Brandes, Germany

Christmas is Germany's most important public holiday. It's winter in Germany and the perfect Christmas is white. In Germany, children often leave home very early and live far apart from each other, but Christmas is time for a get together. Sons and daughters visit their parents, or parents visit their grown up kids and their grand children for the holidays. It seems the whole of Germany is on the move at Christmas time.

Christmas cookies and a very heavy Christmas cake, called "Stollen" — made with white sweet chocolate, raisins and almonds — is absolutely necessary for a successful Christmas. My mother's was the best — like every mother. Traditionally the ladies decorate the Christmas tree on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. My mother and Marianne, my wife, were in charge.

The traditional Christmas dinner in the south of Bavaria is duck. I am the chef in my family and the duck I cook is a very crispy roast duck, stuffed with vegetables, apples or chestnuts, served with a sweet-sour red cabbage and either mashed potatoes, potato dumplings or bread dumplings. We prefer to drink a red wine but you can drink beer too. My mother makes the dessert; she traditionally bakes a cheesecake.

The candles of the Christmas tree illuminate the living room and in the background you can hear the sound of a Christmas choir or an organ concert. This is the perfect Christmas atmosphere we like. But we can't wait any longer.

We sit in front of the Christmas tree, unwrap our presents, admire our gifts, and enjoy the pleasure in everyone's eyes.

By Don W. Gilmore, Canada

The kids were still pretty small, probably 3-1/2 and 5, and they informed me that it would be much more fun to go to the forest out back to cut a Christmas tree by ourselves rather than just buy one from a lot in town. (I guess they got the idea from a Christmas cartoon on TV)

As the winds howled outside, at an effective wind-chill" of -38 I shuddered at the thought of tomorrow's "labor of love". Suzanne was busy in the kitchen and also on the phone, discussing with the neighbors who should prepare what food for the Christmas dinner table.

In our little rural area, all the families gather at one home for Christmas dinner. Not like in the big city. I put another couple of logs on the fire.

The next morning was splendid; the day before Christmas. The winds had disappeared; it was calm. And, the small, almost white sun caused the new 20 cm of virgin snow to sparkle. Beautiful, but now 130 cm in depth! How to get to that tree, with two little ones only about one meter tall? The answer: the sled, the draught animal



Don W. Gilmore and his dog Shan Dian

A Canadian Country Christmas

and Dad!

Off we went, bundled up, toward the pre-selected blue spruce tree 200 meters away. After digging snow, trimming limbs, and

securing the load (2 kids and a tree) on the sled, back we hauled. Lesley and Jeff thought my puffing and panting was amusing; they giggled and pleaded with me, the horse, to go faster.

The Christmas season is upon us once again. Though the location may be different, the joy of the celebration is the same. Despite globalization, after all, a holiday is still a holiday. Many people consider Christmas as a religious tradition while for others it is simply an excuse for a party. And right now, millions of people are preparing for the same event.



Tero Rautiainen's version of Santa

White Xmas in Santa's Homeland

By Tero Rautiainen, Finland

White, pure snow. Bright stars in the sky. Family and friends are together celebrating the best time of the year — Christmas.

Time flies so fast and again we realize that it is almost Xmas. We are preparing and waiting, hoping for Santa to come to bring those precious gifts and presents. Department stores started to play familiar tunes since November, so you cannot ignore the approach Christmas.

I come from Finland, the homeland of the Santa Claus. That is why Christmas has a special place in my heart. Now even though I am thousands of miles away from home I can feel that Christmas spirit is rising here as well.

Being away from my home and family has made me see the true meaning of Christmas. It is much more than giving and receiving gifts and presents. It is the time of the year when you should be with your loved ones.

An Orthodox Christmas

By Veronika, Belarus

Every year on January seventh all Orthodox people celebrate Christmas in my country. This is a big and interesting holiday. At night on the sixth and seventh of January every body goes to church. They spend all night there. Unmarried girls play at fortune telling with cards. They want to know their fate and future husband.

On the streets of the towns there are public events, fairs, concerts, a good time to make merry. Everybody invites guests. In the houses the tables are spread with all kinds of delicious food. People come to exchange presents and sing songs. I love this holiday very much!



Veronika with her parents

Magical Christmas Memories

By Siobhan Hemmerich, USA

With a cinnamon-scented tinge spicing up the air and snowflakes settling softly on the pine trees outside, my family and I pulled out the decorations for the Christmas tree. Each ornament held a memory as we placed them one-by-one on our tree, which stood grandly in our living room. My sisters and brother joked and jostled with one another as we hung the tinsel.

Tree trimmed, we stood around the tree for the moment of lighting. The lights were all turned off, so that the gray twilight from outside softly blanketed the room.

We plugged in the strings of lights, and the tree came alive in a burst of color! Small carousel horses began to turn on their axles, and a miniature storefront reading "Siobhan's Shoppe" lit up to show a small shelf full of sweets. One of our favorite ornaments, though, was a miniature book telling the Christmas Story.

On Christmas morning, as I look back upon my childhood memories of Christmas, I remember a time of magic and wonder that was far beyond that which could be contrived by gifts and candy. The excitement of the gifts under the tree on Christmas morning and the fun of making gingerbread houses and drinking hot chocolate have all become part of the season.

Reading a passage from the Bible, an American family celebrates Christmas with a tradition of their own.

While Christians and secular people may observe the holiday in different ways, spending time with family and friends is commonplace for most.

Photo by Michael Reynolds



Siobhan Hemmerich (the first on the left) with her friends

Kiwi Kungfu Xmas

By Zhi Hengyi, Chinese

I study at high school in Christchurch, New Zealand. I live with a local family and another overseas student from Brazil.

On Christmas Eve, the landlord asked me to take the Christmas tree to the lounge. Dolly, the landlord's daughter, tried to decorate the tree with lights, small dolls and candy. My roommate made masks like deer. The youngest child found many different styles and colors of socks, and hung them on the side of bed. My landlord's parents came to our house to celebrate Christmas day with their children and boarders.

"I think this is your favorite." Oh god! I never thought I could eat Chinese food — Beijing roast duck on Christmas Day in Christchurch! After dinner, my roommate showed off his samba skills. He was so wonderful, but my joy did not continue, the next performer was me! My landlord's son thought that all Chinese people knew martial arts!!! I had to show resourcefulness in an emergency. I pretended I knew Kungfu and performed the "Monkey King". Of course it was all made up! My landlord's son really thought I was a Kungfu master.

That was my first overseas Christmas in 2000, and it's a memory I will never forget.



Turkey and Dumplings

By Liang Xiaoying, Chinese

My husband and I (the second from the right in the photo) and two Chinese friends once spent Christmas with a friend's family in the city of Leicester, UK, in 1998.

The English have a big dinner with turkey on Christmas Day. We wanted to add a Chinese flavor by making dumplings. On Christmas Eve we made dumplings. It

took a long time to chop the cabbages because the kitchen and the knife were both too small!

We had a huge meal and to follow a special rich dessert called Christmas pudding, which contains fruit and brandy. In the evening we played games with all the family — and drank and ate more!

We all went back to our student house happier (and heavier!!).

Champagne, Carols and Christmas Cheer

By Pete Davidson, UK

Christmas in our house always begins with Mum rising at dawn to dress the turkey and put it in the oven. It would be Mum who began Christmas, no-one else could, or would remember. I think one Mother's Day is not enough. Stockings take a few minutes to unravel: never ending, little goodies the year hadn't realized were missing pop out. We were usually good kids, and waited at least until dawn was a possibility before ripping the little packages apart.

One year, we thought we should learn how to be Santa Claus, so we dressed up, prepared minute little stockings for our two cats, filled them with cat sweets, tip-toed into the kitchen and placed them at the end of their baskets.

Like all good Santas, we wanted to check on them a few minutes later, and so put our heads round the door. Of course, they weren't as good as us, and within seconds had ripped the stockings and wrapping to pieces, and were sitting condescendingly staring at the sweets, looking insulted as if they would nev-

er stoop to eating such things.

Once the day gets into full swing, Christmas carols start to boom around the house, recorded and live versions. Aunts, uncles, cousins arrive bringing enough packages to cover the floor of the front room. As the years go by, they bring more kids too. Champagne bubbles wait nervously in their glasses for the Christmas toast. Then we're off, all of us handing presents round, tearing paper, making little (not always) grunts and squeals of delight, or of something anyway.

Then by mid afternoon it's time to eat, and eat. And drink. Cooking skills and stamina that would normally be mobilized to make a week of food always manage to bring it all together into one meal. Turkey, ham, sausages and loads of veg. After lunch, for the hardy, it's time for chocolate.

If anyone is still in a fit state to move and talk coherently, it's off to the park for a leisurely stroll in the park, before it gets dark, that is. And then, later it's back to the table for tea and cake.



Kids 孩子

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

One hundred years ago, a little girl by the name of Virginia O'Hanlon was fighting a battle which required her to seek out the truth. To this day, we still thank her for asking the question that elicited such a poetic, memorable response.



I don't know whether anyone of you kids would ask your mom or dad the same question today, because I believe you all know a lot more than little Virginia 104 years ago, whatever the answers from your parents or your buddies are, whether you are satisfied or not, we are here to assure you the simple fact once again here in Beijing, as the editors 103 years and 361 days ago did in New York: Santa Claus is coming to you! If you have been a good kid this year, wait for him three nights from today and see what happens! But Christmas is more than Santa Claus, in the excitement of present giving and receiving, we mustn't forget the real meaning of Christmas.

According to the Bible, God decided to allow his only son, Jesus Christ, to be born to a human mother and live on earth so that people could understand God better and learn to love God and each other more. "Christmas" meaning "celebration of Christ" honors the time when Jesus was born to a young Jewish woman Mary.

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter. But before they came together, she was found to be with child. Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, so he had it in mind to break the engagement quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Although the exact date of the birth of Jesus 2,000 years ago is not known, the calendar on the supposed date divides all time into B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (A Latin phrase, Anno Domini means "in the year of our Lord")

For the first 300 years, Jesus' birthday was celebrated on different dates. Finally, in the year 354, church leaders chose December 25 as his birthday.

Now you know something about Jesus, what about Santa, when was he born? Who were his mom and dad? And how old is he now? Have I ever seen Santa once in my life? Sorry, I know none of the answers, and although I haven't seen him yet, I might still be lucky! However, I think I'm quite familiar with him—Santa Claus.

Why do I think I know him? Because the Bible says: What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Go ahead, see for yourselves, it's in Hebrews 11-1.

Legends about Santa first appeared in the Scandinavian Peninsula thousands of years ago. Some say Santa is the descendant of a God of wisdom, art and



Dear editor:
I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth. Is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon

New York Sun
December 25, 1897

Virginia,
Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give your life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We would have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?

Nobody sees Santa Claus but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart.

Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view, and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world, there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus?! Thank God, he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



poetry or war. Some say he is St. Nicholas. Some say something else. Anyway, there are many different Santas in different countries around the world. Early Santa in Germany rode a two-wheel cart, not a sleigh with reindeer; and good kids only got apples, nuts, or candies; how disappointing, don't you think? Ha ha ha.



I don't know what Santa looked like before the 1860s. He still must be a kind old man, but what he dressed in, I don't know. Thanks to Thomas Nash, a cartoonist of the 19th century, one of the most beloved figures in the world appeared under his pen. The plump, kindly, and amiable

Santa, white beard, red robe, reindeers, sleigh, was widely accepted since the day he was created.

In Holland, every time Santa comes, he is accompanied by his assistant, Black Peter. Good kids get presents, but bad kids will be taken away by Black Peter.

In German, Santa also has an assistant, named Knecht Ruprecht, Krampus, or Pelzebock, who has a big bag full of gifts on his shoulder for good kids, and a stick in his hand for bad kids.

Yes, I hear you say, the story about Santa is the same all over the world, no matter where you are, so you better make sure to be good.

One upon a time, a story was told:

Late one evening, Mr. Jonathan Stark was roused from a sound sleep when his wife reported hearing a tinkling of bells over the house. He looked into the street to check for a passing

carriage, however the night was black and the street was empty. As Mrs. Stark looked overhead, she claims seeing a strange sight: "flying animals," Mrs. Stark reported, "eight of them. They were pulling a sled..."

I believe in this, but not all of it. I'm curious, I just wonder, will Santa still ride reindeer this year?

If not, what will he ride? Do you want to tell me your answer?

Another question, there are three days to go until Christmas Eve, can you guess what Santa is doing now?

My answer is Santa Claus is practicing his tiptoeing, so he doesn't wake up any children on Christmas Eve. He is practicing tiptoeing on roofs, on squeaky stairs, on gravel, even on snow. It's very important because Santa has a rule that he can only deliver presents if children are asleep. It would be very awkward if the children were sleep-

ing, and Santa woke them up! So Santa takes tiptoeing practice very, very seriously.

When Santa finally arrives, he will bring good kids all kinds of gifts, but what are you dreaming for?

Here are some of the letters children wrote to Santa this year:

Dear Santa :
I would like a Nano Baby for Christmas. I would like Easy Bake icing. And I would like the Backstreet Boys tape 1. And I would like the Spice Girls tape 1. And I was a good girl all year. And I was wondering how you both are doing.

Dear Santa:
For Christmas, could I please have a Barbie Full Size Jeep, a Talk Girl, Finger Nail Fun, Casey Cart Wheel, Pretty Cosy Curls, a necklace, Sailor Moon dolls, and Luna The Cat. I will leave you some cookies and a car-



Having fun at Santa Village, Rovaniemi, Finland

rot for your reindeer. Thank you.

Dear Santa:
I would like on my wish list ... healthy family, growing bank account, shrinking bills, compassion for each other, too.

Dear Santa:
I would be really pleased if you would let me have these things for Christmas:

1. Lego Police Station & Gaol
 2. Action Man with yellow hair
 3. Walkie Talkies
 4. Books
 5. Puzzles
 6. Videos-Tiny Toy Story & Black Cauldron & Cinderella
 7. Coloring books
 8. Activity Books
 9. Glass Painting Kit
 10. Torch
 11. Lego Police Van, Helicopter & Launch
 12. Bubble Bath
 13. Book of Rhymes & Poems
- I have been a good boy this year and so has my little sister. I really love you because you are so kind giving presents to all the children. Don't crash your sleigh on Christmas Eve.



Santa Claus Village

Dear Santa:
All I want for Christmas is my mum.

May I know what will you ask from dear Santa?

Oh, I forgot to tell you, if you travel to other countries with your family, remember, in Italy, call Santa, La Befana, in France, call him Pere Noel, in Switzerland, call him Christkindl or Christ Child, in Scandinavia call him Julenisse, or Juletomte. If you are going to Britain, easy, just call him Father Christmas. What's more, if you are staying here in Beijing, and want to see what kids in other places are doing, try the Santa's hometown in Finland: www.santaclauslive.com.

Have I forgotten anything? Yes, don't forget to pray to Santa to bring presents for your dear mom and dad, for they have worked very hard to take good care of you for the past year, and they will continue to do so in the years to come. So, on Christmas morning, after you wake up, open your eyes, cry out "It's Christmas!", run to your mom and dad, give them a heartfelt hug, a big warm kiss, and say "Thank you for what you've done for me, Merry Christmas!"



DIY DECORATIONS

Make Christmas better than usual by making your own decorations. It won't take as much time as you think, and will be a lot more fun!

**Paper Wreath**

The wreath is a symbol of hope and is made of evergreen leaves. Cut leaves from different shades of green paper (stiff paper is better). Cut a hole in the bottom of each leaf and connect them with a wire. Bend the two ends to form a small hook for hanging. Add leaves continuously to the wreath, making sure each one covers half the previous one, until you get the final arrangement you want. Add a big red ribbon in the center and hang on the door or wall. Add some glitter, ornaments, and holly along with some cotton to complete the look. You can light candles around the decorated bough or the wreath placed on the table.

**Jinglebell Wreaths**

This kind of wreath can be heard in every corner of the house! Paint the bells bright colors and thread them into the wreath. Tie on a piece of ribbon. You will hear the wonderfully familiar sounds of the holidays in every corner of the house!

**Paper Star**

Handmade colorful paper stars will definitely add a strong festive touch. Cut a square or rectangle shape and cut out into pleats (according to the number you want). Fold the pleats in half and staple at the center. Cut each end of the folded paper and the sharp corners will form the points of the star. Make the pleats open like a fan and stick the two ends. You can store the star until the next Christmas.

**Necklace Curtain String**

Usually we use common fabric strings to tie up the window curtain. Since it is Christmas time, why not use necklaces or head-dress flowers instead?

Small white candles are easy to find in the market. No matter if you place them on the dining table, the floor, inside the cabinet or on the handrail of the stairs, these little white candles will make your house look much more romantic and cosy.

**Apple Candle**

Prepare some fresh apples and cut out enough flesh to put in a candle stand. As the candle burns, it gives off a wonderful smell of fresh apples.

**Ice Candle**

Use a large glass bowl to hold artificial ice cubes. Put a little candle at the center, to give a sparkling crystal-clear Xmas appearance.

(Some pictures provided by Trendshome)



Photo by Chen Shuyi

Oh, Xmas Tree...

What is Christmas without the Christmas tree? It is the ultimate decorating highlight, an absolute must for Christmas. The traditional European tree is decorated with lots of red, green and gold. There are also some trees all in gold or silver. For a stunning finished result, why not try these creative themes guaranteed to impress!

Pyramid-shaped Flower Tree!

Select a golden flowerpot (or a pot wrapped with golden paper), cut the mud into a pyramid-like shape and put into the pot. Arrange colorful flowers, silver pinecones or some golden walnuts into the "pyramid". White and purple iris is the best choice here, to create a strong visual image.

This year Beijing has imported larger supplies of flowers especially for Christmas and the New Year, mainly from Holland and Denmark, such as pineapple, arrowroot, and orchid. For the best selections, go to Laitai Huahui (Laitai Flower Market in Liangmaqiao, Chaoyang District)

To show your tree off to the best effect, add candles and place in front of a mirror, to double the impact.

Based on this idea, why not choose other themes to decorate your tree. For instance, hang candies, cookies and chocolates to create a candy tree; a family tree decorated with family photos; a tree with wooden decorations painted in copper and



pine cones or a doll theme tree with miniature dolls and doll furniture. It is your tree and the only limit is your imagination!

Xmas with a Live Tree

There is nothing like the scent of a real Christmas tree. Gifts are placed under the tree, as family and friends gather around to spend the peaceful Christmas Eve.

a. A small one, about 2 feet high is enough to brighten up your house. Before you go out to buy the tree, decide where it

will look best in your house according to both the ceiling height and the width of the room.

b. It is better to choose a tree with smaller needles, as they are easier to decorate. Make sure that there is adequate space between the branches so that the decorations can be hung straight.

c. Once home, do not place the tree near the fire or other heat source or where someone might bump into it. Make sure the stand can hold the tree upright and is big enough to hold water. It is better to make a fresh cut on the trunk so that your tree can start absorbing water immediately. Fill the stand with lukewarm water and refill at regular intervals. The need for frequent refills usually reduces after the first week.

d. After the Christmas season, the branches and trunk of the tree can be used for firewood. The needles of some trees can make an aromatic filling for sachet pillows.

Tel: 67365629/4421 at Chaoyang Yiyuan Flower Market (朝阳艺园花木场); 64618889 at Lvding Flower Garden (绿典时尚装饰).



Photo by Chen Shuyi

Xmas with a Chinese Flavor

Christmas means peace and goodwill to all, and decorations with traditional Chinese patterns provide you with a traditional Chinese craft symbolizing propitious wishes. This year celebrate Christmas and have fun decorating your house in both western and oriental styles.

Wang Feng's Candle Engraving

At Xmas, candles are extremely popular, transforming the atmosphere of an ordinary room. Wang Feng, an artist specializes in candle engraving. He will personalize your candle with Chinese characters or messages of good wishes and tidings. Wang provides a unique service, and his clients come from far and wide to use his skills.

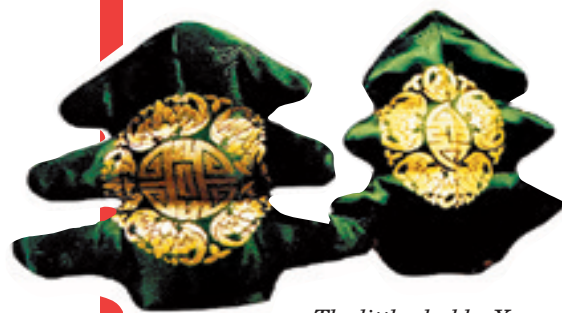
Tel: 80462952/13701073614 at Life!Style!

Sophie's 'Dinning Room'

Close to the west gate of Chaoyang Park is a delightful little shop specializing in 'dining table culture'. Sophie's 'Dinning Room' offers a range of tablecloths, hand painted china-ware and all kinds of decorations and knick-knacks for your table featuring traditional Chinese patterns.

Sophie, the owner, comes from Taiwan, and all the items are designed by her and made in Beijing. She has prepared a large amount of seasonable items especially for Christmas. Santa boots, small hanging decorations, silk wreaths and Christmas trees are all wrapped with a piece of embroidery with traditional Chinese motifs. The green and gold chubby Xmas tree is one of the most popular items on sale, as well as a variety of multicolored candles.

Add: 1 Nongzhanguan Nanlu (农展馆南路), Chaoyang District.
Open: 10 am - 7 pm.
Tel: 65066383/13901065246.



The little chubby Xmas trees



Wang Feng's candles



Sophie's Xmas decorations Photos by Chen Shuyi

Pets' Great Season

Do not forget our little pets, for they want to have a wonderful 1st Christmas in the new century too! When the celebration begins your pets deserve as much enjoyment as we do. And having a designer dressed pet is this year's new Xmas trend!

It is not easy to find Xmas clothes for our pets in most shopping malls. Keep your pet warm in this winter.

For a good selection for all seasons, try Hu Xi Pets Clothing Studio and contact her as early as possible as this is the busiest season, even for pets!

Add: 11 Mianhuajitiao (棉花九条), Xuanwu District, subway to Xuanwumen, walk south of Sogo for about 10 min. **Tel:** 63176698/13621192375.



Photo provided by Hu Xi

Attention!

Good decoration will bring you a festive holiday atmosphere, however, you should pay close attention to some decorative details so as to avoid accidents.

Prevent Fires

Keep the Christmas tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, gas appliances, central heating equipment, etc. Make a careful check of the wires when hanging electric lights. Do not put the wires under the curtains. Candles should be kept far away from curtains or other soft decorations, out of reach of children and animals. Be sure to switch the lights off before you go outdoors or to bed.

Children's Safety

While decorating your house and Christmas tree, hang small decorations as high as possible, out of reach of small children. Do not buy imitation candy decorations to avoid children eating them by mistake. Plants and spray cans of snow used to decorate the house should be nontoxic.



Gifts

礼物

BEIJING TODAY

EDITOR: JIAN RONG, WANG DANDAN DESIGNER: PANG LEI

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Sending a Christmas gift to your friends and relations causes trouble every year. However, this Christmas will be a special one as you are here in China. Reporters from Beijing Today have scoured the city to find Chinese gifts, both modern and traditional. Choose from the selection below; your friends are sure to be delighted.

Gallop into The New Year

Tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake and horse, each following the other, year by year. What are these? These are the Chinese traditional ways of counting years. All together there are 12 animals and it is a custom for Chinese to count a person's age by his animal year. For example, if you know Annie is around 30 years old, and you know her animal year is horse, then you can calculate she was born in 1966. Easy as pie!

2001 is the year of the snake and the next is horse! So what about sending a horse gift to your kids? Kunrouzhige, a store in Laitai flower market sells wonderful wooden rocking horses; if your baby is due next year, it will be a great reminder of the year of their birth.

If your kids are not "horses", just tell them how much older they are than the rocking horse. Animal years are only counted in China, so give your children a gift this Christmas that will hold precious memories for years to come.

Add: 33 Laitai Flower Market, northeast to Youyi Shopping City.
Price: 120 yuan
Tel: 13801324326



A "chatting" and "dancing" toy
Add: Youyi Shopping City
Price: 148 yuan

For husbands

Ring the Changes Nokia 8310

How about upgrading you mobile phone for the coming year? A good way to be a trendsetter is to buy the most up-to-date mobile, provided you have the finances to do it, that is!

At the end of this year, one of the most popular models is the Nokia 8310. It is cheaper than other new Nokia products have been when launched on the market, and it has more functions than ever before. With the adoption of the new GPRS technology, it is an even easier way of communicating with your friends.

Sending such a modern gift to your best friends will make them happy and let them know that you are always ahead of the game.

Price: 3970 yuan
Add: any of Nokia's shop



For grandparents

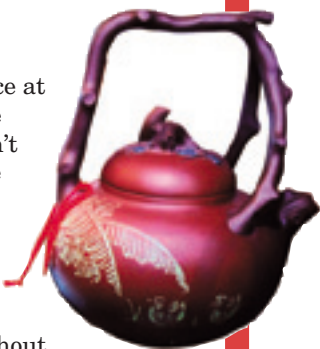
These Shoes are Made for Walking

Shopping for shoes can be a painful experience at the best of times, both in terms of finding a style you really like among the thousands you wouldn't be seen dead in, and then getting a pair that are actually comfortable to walk around in for more than five minutes. An interesting solution is to have a pair tailor-made. And at the same time you can solve the problem of what to buy for that friend or relative who has everything, a headache which happens every Christmas without fail.

Aeolian Bell has two shops in the city. Their Ping'an avenue outlet offers more than 40 different designs for men and women, in both modern and traditional styles.

Not only can you opt for leather or sheep skin, but for the more exotic, kangaroo, ostrich, or lizard skin are available. The shop owner, Jiang Long, says, "Compared with Le Saunda and Pierre Cardin, our products are much cheaper, but by no means inferior to them in quality, and they will last longer!"

Add: 27 Houche Hutong Ping'an Li (east of Zhaodengyu Lu), Xuanwu District
Prices range from 380 yuan to 3,000 yuan.
Tel: 66134266



It might be better than a coffee pot
Add: Panjiayuan Flea Market
Price: 200 yuan

From Here To Eternity

Ever since the birth of Dolly the sheep, the word clone has become well known.

Even so, this advanced technology remains firmly in the realm of science fiction for most of us.

So, husbands and wives, here comes an opportunity to access this new technology. For a really novel gift this Christmas, get down to the Clone Shop, where you and your loved one can clone your body parts including faces, hands and feet!

Many cloned body parts are displayed on the wall of the shop. They are so realistic that even wrinkles on the face and pores on the skin can clearly be seen when you look at them closely. The cloning method is quite simple. The staff make a mold of the part that the customer wants to clone in clay, and just 15 minutes later it will be ready. Much more than a Christmas gift, this one is for keeps!

Add: 37 Chaowai Dajie, Clone Shop
Price: 300 - 1,000 yuan
Tel: 13801351381



For wives



Sophie's table ware will improve any Christmas dinner.
Add: Sophie's Room
Price: 1,000 yuan

For friends

Fancy Dress

Peking opera is a purely Chinese opera form which dates back to the year 1790. That year four local opera troupes from Anhui Province came to perform in Beijing by the order of the imperial court. The tour was a hit and the troupes stayed. The artists absorbed the tunes of the Hubei local opera and drew on the best of Kun Qu, Qin Qiang, Bang Zi and other local operas.

In Peking Opera, the colorful painted faces represent different characters and personality. Yellow and white represent cunning, red stands for uprightness and loyalty, black means valor and wisdom, blue and green indicate the vigorous and enterprising character of rebellious heroes and gold and silver represent mystic or super-natural power.

It takes a long time to learn the intricacies of the art form. Not many Chinese can perform it, not to mention foreigners. But if you have always wanted a taste of what it is like to be a Peking Opera star, now is your chance. A local photographic studio, Experiencing Peking Opera, offers the unique opportunity of making you up just like a real performer.

So, if you are here for Christmas, why not go and spend a happy "Peking Opera Christmas"?



Before



After

Add: Tower B, Kent Center, 29 Liangmaqiaolu, Chaoyang District.
Price: 500 - 3,000 yuan
Tel: 13601120983

For students

Toys are Us

When we think back to our childhood, we always remember our favorite playthings. Educational toys, which help develop intelligence through play have become very popular. So for something other than books or pens, try T.O.T.S, a store that specializes in wooden toys.

Brightly painted Snow Whites and any number of dwarves, they're all here. The wood is oak, imported from Thailand, and the paints are natural, organic and pollution-free. The range of "Playpoint Toys" is aimed at toddlers and includes big, bright building blocks, jigsaws and cute wooden animals. "Pinpoint Toys", for older kids (and the still young at heart) are more in the chess and wooden marble variety.
Address: Guomao, (World Trade Center) Underground Shopping City, Jianguomenwai Dajie.
Price: 100 - 1,200 yuan
Tel: 65054548



Children's outfit!
Add: Scitech Shopping Center
Price: 485 yuan

For colleagues

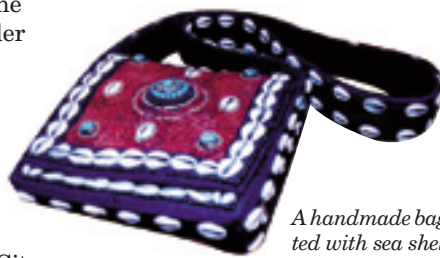
Lantern Festival

Today is an age of information with jet aircrafts, highways and computers as its symbols. It is rare to find mysterious places left in the world, but Tibet is an exception. If you don't have the time to visit, you can still find typical Tibetan folk arts here in Beijing.

Traditional Tibetan lanterns are made from handmade paper using the bark of the Daphne bush, which is known as "Lokta". It grows above 6,500ft altitudes in the Tibetan Himalayas. These colorful lanterns can transport you to a remote world where the only specialty is purity: Tibet.

To be away from the noisy city, sitting under these lanterns and chatting with your dearest friends, aren't these the best things for this year's Christmas?

Add: Youyi Shopping City
Price: 50-150 yuan
Tel: 64731431



A handmade bag dotted with sea shells
Add: Youyi Shopping City
Price: 650 yuan

For your beloved

Emperor's New Clothes

Clothing is made of cloth. Whether its wool, cotton, silk or synthetic, the bottom line is that if there is no cloth, there is no garment, right? Wrong!

Well, seeing is believing, and after you see the new line of "clothless" clothes produced by a Beijing factory, you'll find the answer to the question!

Using a revolutionary technique, a design is embroidered onto special water-soluble cloth. When finished, it is washed in hot water and the material dissolves, leaving only the embroidered pattern, constituting the finished garment.

The most up-to-date techniques, but using traditional Chinese designs, it is a mixture of old and new. The perfect gift for an emperor or empress this Christmas!

Add: Youyi Shopping City
Price: 600 - 2,000 yuan
Mobile: 13910703121



Photos by Lily / Chen Shuyi



Dinner

大餐

DECEMBER 21, 2001

7

EDITOR: JIAN RONG, JIANG ZHONG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Fed up with turkey and all the trimmings? If you are staying in Beijing this Christmas, have a break from the norm and try something different.

Christmas Dinner Bulletin Board

Central Garden Hotel

6pm-7:30pm grand dinner buffet; 7:30pm-11pm live entertainment and lucky draw; 11pm-midnight ball. 388 yuan per person for adult, 120 yuan per person for children *Contact: 62178888*

Hotel New Otani Chang Fu Gong

7pm—midnight Chinese, Western and Japanese style Christmas dinner buffet. Lucky draw first prize is a ticket to the 2002 Korea/Japan World Cup or five-day Korea tour for two. 788 yuan per person for adult, 398 yuan for children *Contact: 65125555*

Great Wall Sheraton Hotel

7pm—midnight, International dishes buffet, seafood, local beer and wine. 1200 yuan +15% per person for area A; 1100+15% for area B; 998 yuan+15% for area C *Contact: 65905566 ext. 2132*

Jade Palace Hotel Beijing

Traditional Christmas dinner buffet and games. 318 yuan per person *Contact: 62628888*

Jinglun Hotel

6:30pm-midnight, Christmas Grand Buffet Christmas Eve Dinner Party with lucky draw fun games and live entertainment. 588-888 yuan (net) per person with local soft drink and beer. *Contact: 65002266 ext. 8111, 4030 or 55.*

St. Regis Beijing

Extensive Christmas buffet with live cooking station (288 yuan net per person); authentic Italian Cuisine and a Christmas Eve Candlelight Dinner (988 yuan net per person); menu of the year complemented with free flow imported wines and champagne (1388 yuan net) *Contact: 65321336*

Scitech Hotel

5pm-midnight, sumptuous dinner buffet, masked ball, dancing and singing performances and lucky draw, 580 yuan per person *Contact: 65123388*

Taiwan Hotel

6:30pm-midnight, Official Cuisine (888 yuan per person), Shanghai Cuisine (488 yuan per person). *Contact: 65136688 ext. 8047*

Xiuyuan Hotel

6:30pm-midnight, Grand Christmas dinner buffet and lucky draw. 880 yuan per person for Banquet Hall. *Contact: 68313388 ext. 10104*

Shaoewang's Seafood Restaurant

Sumptuous Cantonese Cuisine. 688 yuan for 2-person package, 888 yuan for 4 and 1280 for 6. *Contact: 65513888*

Winterless Hotel

6:30pm, December 21. Lovers Package 168 yuan for two, Family Package 138 yuan for two. *Contact: 65812288 ext. 2805*

A Chinese Christmas Dinner

Xihaiyusheng (西海鱼生 West Sea Uncooked Fishes), a traditional Chinese restaurant invites you to enjoy Christmas dinner, Chinese style.

Yusheng, Cantonese cuisine, refers to uncooked fish dishes. Very popular in Chinese coastal cities, in recent years many Cantonese restaurants have popped up in Beijing. But don't be fooled into thinking this is a typical Chinese restaurant.

Unlike other Cantonese restaurants, the décor reminds you more of a Japanese restaurant. The sliding door, the elliptical lanterns and the tableware all try to trick you that it is a Japanese restaurant. No matter, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Start with the cold dishes, deliciously flavored with ingredients like ginger, onion, lemon, garlic, Chinese onion, pepper, taro, sesame, peanut, soy and potherb mustard. For main dishes, the restaurant has introduced some new specials this Christmas, such as Japanese Cool Dish, Fish Dish, Japanese Tuna, Sliced Beef and Tripe, Assorted Pot Stewed Meats, sweet corn soup, Sweet and Sour Pork and Fried Shrimps with Celery and Fresh Lily. You can also find a selection vegetable dishes. You are sure to find your favorite dishes here.

It is a good idea to eat in the Japanese-style booths if you have a group of ten or more. Not only can you dine in style, you can also sing, dance, play cards and mah-jong. If you order a pot of oolong tea, the professionally trained waitresses will perform a traditional tea ceremony.

For an even more unique experience, why not try dining in one of the three imperial boats the restaurant has anchored on the bank of Xihai. It will be an unforgettable Christmas experience: the red lanterns hung from the dining hall sway in the darkness, the moon seems much brighter in a quiet world and the Chinese music performed by beautiful girls takes you back a thousand years.

Of course, the restaurant also prepares Christmas gifts for you. When you order Chinese dishes they will present you with a few traditional Christmas dishes, such as turkey, wine and desserts.

So for a break from the usual this Christmas, try it and see!

How to get there: the restaurant is located in the first alley south of Jishuitan Subway Station, follow the alley and you can't miss it! **Contact:** 66180466, 66183818



Photo by Zhuang Jian



Photo by Chen Shuyi

Christmas Eve-the Mongolian Way

How would you like eating your Christmas dinner in a giant Mongolian tent? How would you like trying Mongolian dishes on Christmas Eve? How would you like watching Mongolian wedding ceremony performances after a hearty Christmas dinner? You can get all these in the exclusive Mongolian restaurant in Beijing- Tenggelitala (腾格里塔拉 Heavenly Grassland).

The signature dish is Genghis Khan Honorable Roast Sheep, awarded to his generals and soldiers for their triumphant return.

If you prefer, you can choose to eat your Mongolian feast in the tents pitched on the top of the building. The three tents are all decorated in a Mongolian style. After dinner, enjoy the Mongolian wedding ceremony on the second floor or buy some finished sterling silver Mongolian souvenirs in the hall on the first floor.

Cantonese cuisine and a western buffet are also on offer.

Where: Near Dinghuisi, Haidian District
Contact: 68150808, 68288322
Price: 388 yuan per person

VIP Treatment

As part of the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Diaoyutai Hotel (钓鱼台大酒店) has served delicious dishes to visiting presidents from many countries around the world. This Christmas Eve you too can dine like a president.

There are eight important cuisines in China. The state banquet offered by the Diaoyutai Hotel combines the best flavors of Chinese and western cuisine, catering to the tastes of people from all over the world.

The Christmas Eve buffet supper features elaborate dishes



Photo by Chen Shuyi

New Shanghai Cuisine

Shanghai Cuisine combines the flavors of different Chinese cuisines, vegetable dishes, Islamic cuisine and western dishes. The original flavors materials are better preserved.

Yeshanghai (夜上海 Night of Shanghai) has been even more inventive. This Christmas, try some new Shanghai dishes, such as Flavored Chestnuts and Glutinous Rice, Wonderful Fresh Asparagus, Chicken with Jellyfish and Gourd Shaped Duck with Eight Jewels. After dinner, watch Peking Opera performances downstairs.

Where: second floor of Chang'an Grand Theatre.
Contact: 65101326.
Price: 80 yuan per person

Shark's Fin Banquet

Shark's fin is one of the most famous ingredients in Chinese cooking, considered to be highly nutritious. This Christmas in the Beijing Hotel (北京饭店), try a sumptuous Shark's Fin Banquet. Stewed Shark's Fin Mixed with Rice & Bean Sprouts, the main dish of the banquet was originated in 1980's Hong Kong, and is very popular in Chinese coastal cities.

The Shark's Fin Banquet also includes other dishes such as Stewed Abalone and Mixed Sea Food in Jar, Steamed Cod with Preserved Vegetable and Boiled Sea Food Ball.

Where: 2nd floor, building A, Beijing Hotel **When:** 6pm-9pm, December 24, 2001. **Prices:** 1,500 yuan per person. **Contact:** 65130766 ext. 288, 388



Old Beijing cuisine, Great Christmas

Beijing Palace Restaurant (北京宫) offers you an ideal place to try local Beijing cuisine, which doesn't include overly expensive dishes, but dishes to be found on an ordinary family's table.

Fried Mung Bean Curd, Beijing Cabbage Marinated in Mustard, Beijing Roast Duck, Sliced Pork Steamed with Deep Fried Rice, Sliced Pork Sauteed in Soy Sauce and Braised Yel-

low Croaker in Special Sauce, are cheap but satisfying.

Cold dishes, pastries, dried and candied fruit will be offered. Taste Beijing cuisine, touch Beijing's culture and spend a wonderful Christmas Eve in the Beijing Palace Restaurant.

Where: 130, Chaoneidajie, Chaoyang District **Contact:** 65236320 **Price:** 80 yuan per person (180 yuan per person for banquet)



Photo by Zhuang Jian

Traditional Gingerbread Goodies

The season for giving to family and friends is here, and it is never complete without certain goodies to adorn your dining table! Take the sweat out of Christmas dinner this year by letting Traders Hotel Beijing (国贸饭店) help you out with the celebration hassle-free!

The little Deli Corner, open daily from 6:30am till 10pm is now tempting on-lookers with the sweet smelling Gingerbread House, Log Cake, Fruit Cake, and ready-to-take-away Roasted Turkey and Ham.

If it is tempting tidbits you are looking for, you will not be disappointed! There are Gingerbread Men, Chocolates and crystal-sugar coated Cookies on Sale, each individually painted and packaged, ready to give to your nearest and dearest!

Christmas Stollen: Small (100g), 8.8 yuan each; Large (350g), 18 yuan each **Gingerbread Goodies:** Little Gingerbread Men (100g): 8.8 yuan each; Sugar-coated Gingerbread Stars (100g): 8.8 yuan each; Gingerbread House: 90 - 300 yuan each; Santa Shaped Chocolate: 16 - 30 yuan each **Christmas Roasted Turkey:** 128 yuan per kilogram **Christmas Ham:** 158 yuan per kilogram

Where: 1 Jianguomenwai Avenue **Contact:** 65052277 ext. 6211

Talk Turkey

Where to buy for your homemade dinner

Jenny Lou's

Groceries only. Turkey, raw, 39 yuan/kg. **Where:** 50 meters south of the west gate of Chaoyang Park, opposite Green Lake Apartments. **Contact:** 65016249

Charlotte's Butchery and Delicatessen

Turkeys imported from USA, hams, cookies, chocolates and bread. Also has gingerbread, gluhwein, summertime wines. Turkey, 50 yuan/kg. **Where:** 1 Nongzhannanlu, south of the west gate of Chaoyang Park. **Open:** 10am-8pm. **Contact:** 65083884

Lido Market

Turkey imported from USA, raw 78 yuan/kg, cooked 98 yuan/kg. **Where:** east entrance, Lido Holiday Inn, Jiangtailu, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Contact:** 64376688 ext. 1542.



Photo by Zhuang Jian

Christmas dinner - the chef Rocky way

Christmas Cookery Lesson

If you want to prepare a traditional Christmas dinner at home, Chef Rocky of the Traders Hotel Beijing will give you valuable instructions.

Fruitcake: (Christmas Cake)

Beat butter, egg yolks and sugar together, and stir in flour blended with baking powder, diced candied orange and lemon peel, raisins, currants and sultanas macerated beforehand in rum, grated lemon peel and spices. Lightly fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into a greased cake tin lined with greased paper; bake in a slow oven. After cooling, cover with marzipan and royal icing.

Ginger bread: (Men)

Gingerbread is made of flour, eggs, butter and ginger powder sweetened with molasses.

French gingerbread is made of flour mixed with honey, powdered sugar, potash dissolved in a little milk, chopped almonds, candied orange and lemon peel, flavored with anise, cinnamon, powdered cloves, grated orange and lemon peel, baked on a baking sheet and brushed with syrup when done.

Christmas pudding:

Traditional steamed fruit pudding. To serve, garnish with holly, pour on brandy and light, and serve with brandy butter.

Whole Boiled ham:

Boiled whole ham, brushed with honey to glaze and finished in the oven. Serve hot with vegetables and parsley sauce, or cold with an assortment of condiments.

Pineapple-Glazed Baked Ham:

Par-boiled ham, covered with a pineapple and brown sugar glaze and then baked in the oven.

Roast Gammon:

Roast gammon, glazed with marmalade and mustard, then garnished with orange slices and cloves.

Roast Beef with Yorkshire pudding:

Tender roast beef, on the bone, served with individual Yorkshire puddings, thin gravy and horseradish cream sauce.

Roast stuffed Turkey and Rich gravy:

A whole turkey stuffed at both ends and roasted until tender, served with a rich gravy made from turkey giblet stock.



Photo by Zhuang Jian



Rejoicing

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

庆祝

BEIJING TODAY

EDITOR: JIAN RONG, JIAO PEI DESIGNER: PANG LEI

Here are some different ideas on how to spend your Christmas away from home. Choose what appeals the most!



Paint the Town Red!
Whether you want to be an

interested observer, or take part yourself, this Christmas Eve in Beijing offers a multitude of events to help you get into the Christmas spirit. If you really want to party the night away, try one of the big hotels, which offer free flowing drinks included in the price.

Salsa Pekina! From 7pm, Italian buffet, dance displays, party games, and 10 yuan drinks all night. In aid of Project Hope - raising money to buy computer systems for remote villages in Shanxi province. Entrance 100 yuan including one free drink. Peter Pan, Ritan Beilu. 65950680

Power Dance! Performed by the 40 hottest dancers from Beijing Dance Academy, featuring American dances from the 50's, Latin dance, Cabaret, dances from the mysterious orient, games & lucky draws, 988 yuan, Grand Ballroom, Kerry Center Hotel, 65618833-6220/6389/6333.

Dance the night away with the latest music played by a funky DJ. Dec. 24, from 8pm, 68 yuan including two standard drinks, Pit Stop Formula One Grand Prix Sports Bar, Harbour Plaza, 64362288.

Dance saloon! Talk about dance while enjoying performance, dinner, gifts. Dec. 22, 5:30-9pm, Shiyen Theater of Beijing Modern Dance Troupe, 67573879.

Dinner buffet, free flow of beer and soft drinks, Dec. 24, from 6:30pm, 888 yuan the Patio Coffee Shop and Lobby, Holiday Inn Lido, 64376688.

"Who will marry Princess Anna"--Charles from Tianlun Country and William from Dynasty Country will compete with each other to marry Princess Anna. Tianlun Dynasty Hotel, Dec. 24, 7pm-0:00, 1488 yuan, 65138888.

Latino and Hollywood Christmas: DJ mixes it up Latin and Hollywood style as you feast. 580 yuan, Dec. 24, 6pm-1am, Grand Ballroom, Swissotel Hotel, 65012288.

Catch the Russian State Gedengke Dance Art Troupe's first ever shown China, Beijing Exhibition Center, Dec. 22-24, 7:15pm, 60-500 yuan, 65903399, 65903737.

Chinese lion dance: you can watch the exciting lion dance in Scitech Hotel, Dec. 22, 29 at noon, 65123388.



Family Christmas
Families staying in Beijing will appreciate one of the children's parties or concerts on offer.

Christmas concerts - Mulan Children's Chorus, Forbidden City Concert Hall. Dec. 24, 7:30pm.

Christmas Carols Chorus, Dec. 23, 7:30pm, Beijing Concert Hall, 66057006.

Waltz Gala, by Central Opera Symphony Orchestra, Dec. 24, 7:30pm, Century Theater.

World Classics, Dec. 24, 7:30pm, National Library Concert Hall, 88545348.

Family Christmas party, Dec.25, 5-10pm, 288 yuan, Sunshine Coffee Shop, Beijing Hotel.

Bring children to take a photo with Santa all the way from Lapland. Everyday except Mon, 6-7pm. Holiday Inn Lido Hotel, 64376688 ext. 2884/2876.

22-meter-high Danish castle is situated in the plaza of Tianlun Dynasty Hotel, featuring the Snow White and the seven dwarfs.



A Feast for the Eyes

For a more interesting Christmas experience, try some of these events.

Exhibitions- "Make one's home wherever one is"--an exhibition from 41 embassies in Beijing. From Dec. 28. China Revolution Museum.

Picasso Etching Exhibition at the China Millennium Monument, till next year. Fuxinglu, West Chang'an Avenue.

Chinese Art Exhibition. See Chinese ink wash and oil paintings, handmade carpets, furniture, model planes, handmade lamps and much more. Over 60 exhibits made by 20 artists. Till Dec. 25, 2-7pm. East yard, 20 Fengbeilu, Fengtai District, 63843455.



"Little Angels" Choir



Wangfujing Church

Parties



Hot Dance



Salsa Dance



Choirs, Carols and Concerts
Haidian, Dec. 24, 6-7pm, 8-9pm, 10-11pm, Christmas choir, Gang Wa Shi, Dec. 22, 2-4pm, Lord's Day youth Christmas worship, Dec. 24, 5:30-6:10pm, Sabbath Christmas Worship, 7-8pm, Joint Candlelight Christmas Worship, 8:30-9pm, Korean Christmas worship, 9:30-10pm, Lord's Day Christmas Worship, Dec. 25, 7-9pm, Christmas worship, Haidian Church, Dec. 24, 6-7pm, 8-9pm, 10-11pm, choir, Ditan Church, Dec. 24, 7pm, music worship. Xishiku Church, Dec. 24, 11pm, Holy Infant baptized, 00:30, Mass. Xuanwumen Church, Dec. 24, 8-10pm.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Dec. 24, 8pm at the Congregation of the Good Shepherd, 3F of the Capital Mansion's Athletic Club. For further information, call 6438-6536. Because of governmental regulations, this event is for foreign passport holders only.

A special Christmas event called "Christmas, Just As It Should Be", is taking place at the Yong'an Hotel. The event includes children's presentations; Youth dramatic dance; Classical music solos; Contemporary worship; Relevant teaching about Christmas. Dec. 23, from 10am. "The River" Yong'an Hotel, south Annex Building 4, 2F. For info, call Don at 13911257602

Christmas choirs will perform at some hotels: "Little Angels", Dec. 24, 6pm, Kempinski Hotel, 64653388-5741. Also concerts at Swissotel, Scitech and Jinglun Hotel.

Lovers

A Time for Romance

Christmas is a good chance for couples, both old and new to get to know each other better. If you are looking for that perfect romantic atmosphere, try some of these suggestions, whether you want a cozy candlelit bar, or something more lively. Dress to impress and have fun!

Candlelight Dinner in Coffee Shop at Scitech Hotel, 80 yuan per head, 65123388. Christmas Movies Party at Just for You Two, 66174200, www.your-bar.com

X'mas by Candlelight



For an energetic start to the season, try a disco or nightclub. Countdown to Christmas Day together, and give each other a memorable Christmas Eve! When you come out in the morning, you'll feel tired but happy.

To add a bit of spark to a long-term relationship, or for a once in a life-time treat, try an evening in a luxury hotel. It is sure to bring out the best in both of you, but beware the expense, it can run to 1,000's of yuan!

Luxury X'mas



Magic fancy dress ball, live performances, lucky draw and dinner buffet. 588 yuan, 5pm-midnight, Scitech Hotel, 65123388 ext. 2014/2223.

Finally, for the recently brokenhearted, going to church could provide the solace you need. (Details above).

Magic X'mas



Special Christmas

Christmas Days Out

If you have indulged in too much eating and drinking this festive season, why not take time to visit one of Beijing's famous parks.

Further afield, some travel clubs organize excursions outside the city. Fengyuxue Outdoor sports Club holds 5-day-courses, including technical climbing, basic knots, ice climbing techniques and also two days camping out. Dec. 24-28, 1,400 yuan, call 65913807, 13801170735

In Western Beijing, visit Dragon King Temple, Baiyi Buddhism Guanyin Nunnery, Mentougou County. You can take a trip there from downtown Beijing. Call Longquan Hotel (69843366 ext. Sales) for further information.

Climb Badaling Great Wall see the beautiful snowy scenery and the wall lit up at night.

Couch Potato

If you just want to relax at home, rent your favorite movies and kick back with your favorite food and drink. Harry Potter is the must-see movie this holiday. Or curl up and read some interesting books about Christmas.

You can also play some word search games like word scramble on the Internet. You can search for them by putting Christmas games into the search engine.

White Christmas?

One way to feel better this cold Christmas is to visit the world famous Ice Festival in Heilongjiang Province. Alternatively, for something a little closer to home, visit Harbin Ice Lamp Art Festival in Ditan Park. From Dec 22 until March, you will find a magnificent display of ice sculpture, beautifully lit up, including the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

Also from Dec. 28 to Feb. 28, the 15th Longqingxia Ice Lamp Art Festival will be held. For more details, call 69191020.

Icecapades

Party on ice, performance, dance, magic show, songs, Dec. 31, 8pm-midnight, Guomao Skating Ring, Xidan Skating Rink, -3F, Xidan Cultural Plaza, 180 Xidan Beidajie, Xicheng District, 66063293, Zhao Lin. Quickie 15-minute ice show, 5:15-5:30pm open rink for all, 38 yuan for 90 minutes (5-6:30pm).

Xinshijie skating rink, -1F New World Champion Rink, New World Shopping Mall, Chongwen District, 67080055 ext. skating rink. The 2th Shijinglong Skiing Revelry Festival, 9am-6pm, 69191617 (Zhao Zhihua).

Spend this Christmas Giving Something Back

Volunteers are needed to help orphans, senior citizens or give hospice respite care. For more information call, Malina on 64669296.

Bars

Tis the season to be jolly

These days there are hundreds of bars in Beijing. Most offer some kind of Xmas activity, so there is no need to stay at home. Larger bars will have special performances, so get on down, enjoy the festive atmosphere, listen to some live music, perhaps even get lucky in a Xmas prize draw. Most bars charge an entrance fee on Xmas Eve, ranging from the modest to 100 yuan and up. For the most popular bars, you may need to buy a ticket in advance to avoid disappointment. Or check out one of the many nightclubs in Beijing.

Vic's The Dec's Happy Hour is organized by YPHH. "Jolly Red Nose" cocktails are 25 yuan. 300 free beers, cheap beers and cocktails! DJ Damon will be spinning the records. Dec. 26, from 6:30pm. Inside the north gate of Worker's Stadium, next to the Outback Bar.

Henry J. Beans "Christmas Cool" for the whole holiday week until New Year's Eve. One standard drink, live band, DJ music. Dec. 24, 9pm-3am, 150 yuan, China World Hotel.

Afunti Folk Restaurant Christmas Cool Party. Featuring selections from dishes on the menu, as well as the famous roast sheep! Live performance, lucky draw. Dec. 24, 150 yuan (including a bottle of beer), 65251071, 65272288.

Get Lucky Bar Bands Revelry Festival, featuring Evening News, Heaven, Tongue, Aska. East of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, 64299109.

Aria's bar Dec. 24, 6:30-11pm, novelties, party hats, jazz band. 200 yuan per head, including a glass of champagne. China World Hotel, 65052266.

Jam House The new band "Evening News" will sing throughout the night, also lucky dip. Dec. 24, Sanlitun South Bar Street, free, 65063845.

CD Cafe Bands: Flower Rhinoceros, Candy Gun, Cui Jian. Dec. 24, 9pm-2am. Other performances from Dec. 22: Liu Yuan and his Jazz Band, Dec. 22; Rock Night, Dec.23; Cui Jian, Candy Gun, Flowerage Rhinoceros. Free, Dongsanhuanlu, beside the Agriculture Exhibition Center (Nongzhanguan), 65018877-3032.

Schiller's 3 Christmas Buffet Dinner with one mini bottle of imported champagne, Live band, fun games, presents, late night dancing & lucky draw, 238 yuan. Dec. 24, West gate of Chaoyang Park. 65931078.

Club Football Bar Watch traditional Boxing Day (Dec 26) football at Club Football (The Red House). For more info, call Thierry at 64167786.